

Using sound to see through solid objects

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Using sound to 'see' through solid objects

by Cristian Pantea

To foil supervillains, Superman relies on his X-ray vision to see through shielded objects to expose dangerous items, such as explosives laced with kryptonite. At Los Alamos National Laboratory, a team of scientists in the Materials Synthesis and Integrated Devices group have invented a technology that works somewhat like Superman's X-ray vision.

Instead of eye beams, this new technology, known as ACCObeam (Acoustic Collimated Beam), uses a new type of sound beam to pierce through physical barriers such as cement, rock and metal and produce high-resolution images of what lies beyond, be it an explosive hidden in a suitcase or an unstable oil well deep in the earth that could fracture and collapse at any given moment.

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